John Carter Brown.

BOUND BY F. BEDFORD

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Copy of a

PETITION

FROM

The Governor and Company of the *Sommer Islands*,

With annexed PAPERS, presented to the Right Honorable

The Councel of State

July the 19th 1651.

Other Copies of several Letters from Captain *Josias Forster* Governor of the said Islands, and from the said Governor and Councel there: with a PETITION from the Inhabitants.

For the more pertinent Information of the several Members that are, or have been of the *Councel of State*, and others who may be willing to understand the same.

As also

An occasional Letter written to Sir *John Danvers*, Governor of the said Company.

With a Short Collection of the most remarkable Passages from the Original to the Dissolution of the VIRGINIA COMPANY.

And a large Description of *Virginia*, with the several Commodities thereof, wherein the general Company of the *Sommer Islands*, as many of their Members have considerable Interest.

London, Printed for *Edward Husband*, 1651.

RPJCB

To the Right Honorable

The Councel of State,

The humble Petition of the Governor and Company of the *Sommer Islands* [alias *Bermudas*;]

SHEWETH,

THat the many great Oppressions upon the said Company and their proceedings in former times, hitherto unredressed, notwithstanding their better hopes in the present Government, occasioneth your said Petitioners most humble desire, that your Honors will be pleased to take view of the state of their Affairs, contracted in this annexed Paper of Considerations, and thereupon to afford such timous answer and relief, as in your wisdom shall seem agreeable to Justice and publique Interest.

They likewise humbly present to your Honors Consideration, the annexed Petition of some of the said Plantation, desiring shipping, &c. to transport them thither, together with the Copy of an Order of their Court, to give your Honors an account of their care, which they hope in due time will be as effectually executed, if they may be so happy as to obtain that Encouragement as may enable them to proceed herein with vigor and resolution. Notwithstanding they desire no further to assert their particular Rights (which they believe you will account very great) then your Honors shall judge agreeable to justice, with publike safety and advantage.

And shall pray.

Considerations upon the first Constitution of the Sommer Islands *Company and Plantation, together with the late Disorders, and the present condition of Affairs there.*

THe Treasurer and Company of Adventurers and Planters for *Virginia*, did by their Indenture bearing date the 25th of *November*, 10. *Jacobi*, sell those Islands for valueable Considerations to several Persons, to be enjoyed, with all those Jurisdictions, Royalties, *&c.* which were granted to them in the first Patent, which invited afterwards many others of true honor and worth to joyn with them; who by their great Expence and Industry advanced the Work so far, that those desolate Places began to be peopled and planted, and several Lords and Gentlemen appearing interessed therein, a Patent was obtained for constituting of the *Sommer Islands* Company, with the greatest Priviledges and Immunities that might be; as enabling them to make such Laws for the good and welfare of that Plantation, as to them from time to time should seem requisite, so they were not contrary to those of this State; as also to revoke, discharge and alter all Officers and Ministers which already have been made, or shall hereafter be made if they shall think it meet, for the Government of the said Islands; and to ordain and establish all maner of Orders, Directions, Forms and Ceremonies of Government, and the same at all times to change and abrogate according to their pleasure, not onely within the Precincts of that Plantation, but also upon the Seas in going and coming to and fro: To be free here from all Customs and Taxes, either for Exportation or Importation for seven years, and of all Subsidies in the Islands for the space of one and twenty years; and after the expiration of Seven years, to pay onely five *per cent.* for ever, for all Goods and Merchandize either Exported or Imported: To resist or subdue by force all such person or persons, as without the special Licence of the said Governor and Company, shall attempt to inhabit within the limits of those Islands; as likewise all such as shall enterprize destruction or invasion,

invaſion, or any hurt or annoyance to the ſaid Plantation, or to the Marriners or Paſſengers going thither and returning thence: No ſtay or imployment to be made within any of the Ports of theſe Dominions, or at Sea of any of their Marriners or Ships, provided or intended for the ſaid Iſlands, or of any of the Proviſions, Goods, Merchandize or Ammunition in any of their ſaid Ships, to be taken or detained from them by any colour or pretence of Authority derived, or to be derived upon any occaſion whatſoever: To have full and abſolute Power and Authority to puniſh, pardon and govern all ſuch as ſhall voyage thither, and inhabit there according to ſuch Orders and Conſtitutions, as by the ſaid Governor and Company ſhall be eſtabliſhed; and in defect thereof in caſe of neceſſity, according to the good Diſcretion of the Governor and Officers reſpectively, as well in Caſes Criminal as Civil, Marine and others, and the ſame proceedings as near as conveniently may be, to be agreeable to the Laws and Policy of *England:* The principal Commanders lawfully authorized there to exerciſe Martial Law in caſes of Rebellion and Mutiny: No other then the Company to tranſport Moneys or Goods out of theſe Dominions to the *Sommer Iſlands*, or to Import any hither, upon pain of forfeiture of the ſaid Goods and Ships to the Uſe of the Company: The Governor and Company may eſtabliſh and cauſe to be made a Coyn to paſs current among the Inhabitants there, of what mettle and form they pleaſe, *&c.*

And if theſe and ſuch like Priviledges had not been granted to them, 'tis no ways probable that any would have undertook at ſo vaſt expences, a Plantation that was like to bring in ſo little profit. Whereas that of the *Barbado's* hath made ſo rich and plentiful Returns to the Merchants and Undertakers; this hath produced nothing hitherto to countervail thoſe great Sums that have been laid out upon it, but inſtead thereof ſtrong oppoſitions from the Court Party here at home; inſomuch that the Company being almoſt tired out with thoſe frequent Oppreſſions, ſeem'd reſolved to quit themſelves of the burthen by the Sale thereof, when it was ſuggeſted that the *Dutch* would give 100000 l. for the Purchaſe; and if the

Court

Court ſhould ſeem unwilling to make them Maſters thereof, no doubt but they would eaſily condeſcend that it might be ſold to the *Spaniard*.

The ſeveral Interruptions here at home produced many factions, eſpecially in the Iſlands, which by ingroſſing that ſmall Trade of Tobacco, *&c.* from thence, ſometimes by one Party, and ſometimes by another, were ſtill heightned, till at laſt upon thoſe great Changes here by the Kings death, they broke out into open Hoſtility and Defiance, yet no blood ſhed, the greateſt part of the Congregational or Independent way (ſo called) were baniſhed by thoſe then in Power, but by the now Governor which was conſtituted ſince, are again received and live peaceably and quietly. Theſe by their over-violent carriage and former Provocations might poſſibly augment the madneſs and malice of the Rabble, and be made leſs able to ſecure themſelves by their own Diviſions, and the Suggeſtions of ſuch as pretended at leaſt to be their friends; However their Sufferings may appear to have been very great, and ſuch as the Company here is very ſenſible of, and have been, and ſtill are very forward to redreſs: But all things cannot be done at once, nor poſſibly in that way that ſome deſire. And whileſt a ſmall Party (ſeemingly zealous for the publique Intereſt, when their own Revenge and private Concernment may poſſibly be as much, if not more intended) propoſe nothing but Force and Power for the Reduction of thoſe Iſlands, in a time when greater intereſts ſeem to be ſo much concerned here at home, theſe particulars may not ſeem unworthy conſideration:

I. The great Rights and Priviledges abovementioned confer'd upon the Company by their Patent, which they can in no wiſe be ſuppoſed to have forfeited, having diſclaimed all thoſe Diſorders committed by that rude multitude in their Inſurrection, and uſed all means in their power for redreſs.

II. The Submiſſion which the Iſlanders inſtance in their late Letters to the Company, acknowledging their juſt Power over them, and promiſing obedience to all their Orders and Injunctions; which they the rather hope for from them, becauſe the Governor there is a man well approved of

for

for his Piety and good Affection to this State, and the government thereof; and who by his faithfulneſs and wiſdom, with the aſſiſtance of other good men there, hath already made a good Progreſs to the quiet ſetling of thoſe Iſlands. Nor can there be thought to be in them generally ſuch a ſpirit of Malignancy as ſome would have it, conſidering amongſt other particulars that might be inſtanced in, how ſtoutly their Magazine Ship defended her ſelf againſt thoſe Pirates of *Scilly* that ſet upon her in her return hither.

III. The great danger there might be, if all means of Reconciliation were denied them, to put them upon ſome deſperate Reſiſtance, or caſting themſelves upon ſome forreign protection, which by ſome there hath been already attempted, conſidering the great ſtrength of the place; and how, if the forcing of them ſhould prove ineffectual (as probably it may) the Iſland may be made a Receptacle for Pirats, to the irrepairable damage as well of the State as Company.

IV. That though their riſing up in Arms, and declaring as they did, ſound high in ſome mens expreſſions, yet 'tis confeſſed by all, that this was carried on by the falſe ſuggeſtions of a few, againſt the Authority and Intereſt of the Company, ſome whereof are ſince dead, and the reſt that are living, if need be, when things are better ſettled (which ſeem already to be in a hopeful way) may be called to a ſevere Account: whileſt the greater part were aſhamed of their Actions, when it appeared to them how much they had been deluded, and who have ſince ſubmitted to the Company.

Laſtly, That as the Company have the greateſt ſhare and intereſt to look to the quieting and ſettlement of thoſe Iſlands, ſo they cannot be ſuppoſed to be ſo much wanting to themſelves and the State, with whom they muſt either ſtand or fall, but that they will carefully uſe all means, that neither they nor the Commonwealth be prejudiced. And if they be not able to carry on the buſineſs by their own ſtrength (which they yet doubt not of) they will make their Addreſſes when occaſion ſhall require, to the State for their Aſſiſtance, which they hope will not be denied them.

And for the better Confirming and Setling of thoſe Iſland

in their due Obedience, it is humbly propoſed, That the State would be pleaſed to declare in ſuch Way, as in their Wiſdom may be thought fit, that the Company may enjoy their Priviledges and Immunities according to the ſaid Letters Patents, whereby they may the more vigorouſly proceed to repair the Loſſes they have ſuſtained under the Oppreſſion of the former times, and improve the Plantation to their beſt and juſt Benefit, wherein they cannot fail to be ſerviceable to the STATE.

TO
The Honorable Company of *Adventurers* for the *Sommer Iſlands*,

The humble Requeſt of ſundry diſtreſſed Inhabitants of the *Sommer Iſlands*.

WHereas ſundry or the moſt part of us were inforced from our Relations and Beings in the Sommer Iſlands, *and at preſent not having wherewith to buy us bread, Humbly requeſt your Honorable Court would be pleaſed to conſider our ſad Condition, endeavour our Peace there, and tranſmit a Ship for that place with what expedition may be, whereby we may procure our Tranſportation thither, before we periſh here through want. We alſo humbly pray your Honorable Court would conſider the great want of godly Miniſters in that Place, and the evil Event that hath followed thereby, and ſupply the Place with two or ſo many, as your Wiſdoms ſhall ſee meet, which may become a great inſtrument of ſetling Peace and proſperity in the Iſland;*

So ſhall we all be bound to pray, *&c.*

Stephen Painter.

William Rener, &c.

At

At a General Court for the Sommer Ilands *Company, holden at the accuſtomed place in* Watling-ſtreet, *on Wedneſday the* 15th *day of* January, 1650.

Sir *John Danvers* Governor,
Mr *Deputy* and others preſent.

ORdered, That the ſeveral Acts and Orders of Parliament, *viz.* the Acts, Entituled,

An Act of this preſent Parliament for Alteration of ſeveral Names and Forms heretofore uſed in Courts, Writs, Grants, Patents, &c. *the* 30th *of* January, 1648.

An Act Declaring and Conſtituting the People of England *to be a Commonwealth and free State, the* 19th *of* May, 1649.

The Orders of Parliament for Subſcriptions to the Engagement, the 12th *of* October, 1649.

Another Act for Subſcribing the Engagement, the 2. *of* January, 1649. be put in Execution in the Iſlands, according to the Limitations, Powers and Proviſions in the ſaid Acts and Orders; and that the Company ſhall improve their Intereſt and Power for rendring the Iſlands duly obedient and ſerviceable to this Commonwealth.

TO

The Honorable Company of *Adventurers* for the *Sommer Iſlands.*

Honorable Company,

HAving an opportunity offered at preſent, I can do no leſs in diſcharge of my Duty, then preſent theſe few lines unto you, giving you to underſtand that your Magazine Ship the *King of Poland*, arrived the 22th of *May* laſt, by which I received your Commiſſion for the Government here, and was freely and peaceably admitted unto the Place without the leaſt interruption, contrary to the expectation of many here amongſt us; for that in the moneth of *September* laſt the countrey in general roſe up in Arms, outed Captain *Turner* of his

Government surreptitiously gotten, placed in his room Mr. *John Trimmengham*, forced Mr. *Nathaniel Whyte* and some others of his Congregation, to go with Captain *Sayle* to his New Plantation, who as we hear are all safely arrived: But Letters from thence certifie that the little Island they are upon, is a most barren Rock, shallow Earth, not hopeful to produce food for the Inhabitants, which hath stirred up the hearts of their Christian friends in *New England*, to manifest their exceeding Bounty towards them, by a charitable Contribution of at least six or seven hundred Pounds sterling, as I have understood by Mr. *Philip Chadock*, who sayled by our Island in *June* last, in a Vessel laden with all maner of Provisions and other Necessaries for them, in case they are in want.

Upon the Arrival of your Ship I made enquiry what quantity of the last years Tobacco could be found in the Countrey, and upon diligent search I could not hear of above Forty or Fifty Thousand at the most, wherefore the Master and we thought fit to lay up the Ship, and stay for this Years Crop, which I hope will redound much to your advantage: For by the blessing of God I can assure you, that your Ship will have her full Lading of Tobacco which will be very good, if the judgement of men better experienced then my self do not fail: And be you assured, her dispatch hence shall be with all expedition prosecuted to the uttermost of my power.

It rests now upon me to give you Account of the present condition of the people of the Island, who (I thank God) are in a fair posture of peace, and very hopeful so to continue; for I have (by Gods blessing upon my weak Endeavors and extraordinary pains taking, and by my powerful presence in each Tribe, with publique Declarations) so prevailed with the people in general, that they vow and protest with one heart and voice for the future not to act ought that may any ways prejudice the peaceable Government of the Ilands under you the Honorable Company and your Substitutes; But will in all things readily, willingly and chearfully submit unto all and every of your lawful Commands, and will with the hazard of their lives maintain your and their lawful Rights against all Opposers whatsoever.

There

There is one thing more I muſt acquaint you withal, which is, That the Countrey will not admit of Captain *Jennings* to be Captain of the *Kings Caſtle*, according to your Commiſſion; for that they have been informed, that he upon Treaty with other Gentlemen in *England*, hath condeſcended to give them admittance into our Harbor with Ship or Ships of force, whereby the Iſland may be loſt, and the Government utterly deſtroyed: But for my part I hope better things of him, and do believe they can never make good their Charge againſt him, howſoever I and the Councel have thought good to ſuſpend him from the Place for the preſent. This Ship brought with her Mr. *Pitts*, and other Gentlemen of theſe Iſlands, Paſſengers from S. *Chriſtophers*, who do inform us, that meeting with certain Gentlemen of *Barbadoes*, who were either by the Government there ſent out from thence, or voluntarily departed from their Plantations by reaſon of ſome troubles there; And upon diſcourſe with the ſaid Gentlemen, they were heard to ſay, That they were bound for *England*, from whence they doubted not to procure a conſiderable Force to ſuppreſs their Enemies there, and to repair their great Loſſes: And for the better effecting thereof, they would in the firſt place invade this Iſland, under pretence that ſome in theſe Iſlands were the Cauſers of their troubles, and ſo make this a place for their Recruit. All which in bounden duty I ought to acquaint you with, referring the premiſed Relations to your more judicious and wiſe Conſultations. I remain,

Your ever faithful Servant,

Sommer Iſlands, the 7th of *September*, 1650.

Joſias Forſter.

TO

The Honorable Company of *Adventurers* for the *Sommer Islands*.

Honorable Company,

MY humble Service presented. Having in the general given an Account of our proceed, in the prosecution of all your Commands, it remains now in particular for me to hint something of my self: And therefore in the first place I do return you all humble and hearty thanks for the high thoughts you have had of me, in that you have honored me with the Government of these Islands under you, as also for your Present of twenty pounds worth of Goods, which I have received according to Order, both which are sufficient Ties of Fidelity to a meer Moralist; but to a Christian, chains of perpetuity: And such I trust you shall ever finde me to be, as far forth as God shall give me Ability to serve you.

I have in a former Letter, which I hope is come to your hands, given you notice of the sad Condition of the Islands when I took my Place, and how it stood during that short time of my progress; I must now proceed to acquaint you what Success the Lord hath given to my weak Endeavors, in restoring the Government to its ancient posture of Peace; From a tumultuous rebellious People, perfidious Commanders, and a Rabble of a number of new found Seditious Agitators, we are now brought to a People resolvedly bent to Peace and Obedience, a Soldiery onely subject to my Command, if I may credit their Protestations, and an utter dissolution of that Fraternity of Incendiaries to our wonted Peace and Government, I and my Councellers being the sole Governors here as ever, under you the Honorable Company. I pray God grant me Wisdom to foresee future Mischiefs, and Courage to maintain what I have already gotten.

There are three things in my judgement obnoxious to the present Government, and if in time by your Wisdoms not prevented, may beget new Troubles: The first and chiefest is, the

the want of two Orthodox Miniſters; 2. The want of the Ships being not here before Chriſtmas; And laſtly, the want of a Magazine of Goods from the Body of the Company, to be reſident with the Officers at Town or elſewhere, to be ſold at reaſonable Rates; for the people do finde in general that the wonted prices be much raiſed by moſt of the Agents here, to the great oppreſſion of the Inhabitants: If the Word do not convince, the Sword cannot reform; If timely Supplies come not at conſcionable Rates, it will be a hard Task for Authority to reſtrain Trade with any Ship: I beſeech you lay theſe things to heart. You acquaint me with an Order of the Councel of State to you directed, to ſecure the Perſons of Captain *Turner*, and Mr. *Vyner*, and to examine the Crimes and Miſdemeanors objected againſt them, and to ſend them home, together with the Examinations and Proofs; What their crimes are, or whereof they are accuſed, I know not, neither have I any Tranſcript thereof: As for Mr. *Vyner*, he is long ſince dead, and hath left behinde him a poor Widow much indebted, and three ſmall children, objects of your pity and charitable conſideration: And to ſend Captain *Turner* home without an Accuſation or Proof thereupon, were in my judgement impertinent and improper; wherefore for the preſent I ſhall onely ſecure his Perſon here, and ſeize upon his Perſonal Eſtate to your uſe till further order.

I am required to ſend you an Account of the Servants belonging to the Colony, as alſo what number of Cattle, and quantity of Corn was left by Captain *Turner*. For Anſwer thereunto, you ſhall know, that I have received from Mr. *Trimmengham* then in place of Government, ten Cows and one Bull, and eight Hogs-heads of Corn: And for the ſervants appropriated to my place, I have in all but fifteen Negro's and Mulattoes, whereof five Men-ſervants and the reſt women; And of a truth I muſt tell you, that of the men I have but two that are able to do their labor, the other three in a maner paſt their work: For three of the women, if they dreſs their own victuals it is well. Here are three Negro's more, one with Mr. Sheriff, and the other a ſmall youth with the Secretary, and the third being a ſmall girl, with Mr. *Fox*. I have a ſmall youth about

about nine years old left with me by Mr. *Buckleman*, I bleſs God, Charity bids me keep him, who ſhall not want whileſt I have for mine own; the childe is tractable, and having neither Father nor Mother, deſerves pity. Now my Requeſt unto you is, That in addition to your former Favors, you would be pleaſed to beſtow his time upon me, or to order me a certain Allowance for a few years towards his Education, in ſome meaſure ſuitable to the hopes I have of him; his name is *Thomas Simpſon*, what his time is I know not. By all this it will appear unto you what a ſmall proportion of Means will accrue unto me, to maintain the Charge of my Office. God knows my heart, I aim not at the riches of this world, my deſires are onely to preſerve my dear Wife and children from miſery and want after my deceaſe, which muſt inevitably fall upon them, if I continue in this chargeable Place of Service, unleſs the Honorable Company ſhall conſtantly & yearly allow me a ſufficient Salary of at leaſt Fourſcore pounds *per annum*, which I truſt you will do both for your own Honors ſake, and for the Dignity of the Place of chief Government by your free choice conferred upon me. I ſay no more but onely this, He that ſacrificeth at the Altar, muſt live by the Altar, and he that ſpends his ſpirits and whole endeavors in diſcharge of Government, muſt live by that Government. I may ſay without any vain glorious boaſting, I have hitherto waded throughout many difficulties, doing my duty diligently therein, and aiming at the Publique not mine own good, and ſhall for ever faithfully perſiſt in ſo doing upon your continued Encouragements; and ſo do reſt,

Your moſt humble and obliged Servant,

Sommer Iſlands, the 20th of *December*, 1650.

Joſias Forſter.

Exam. *per Johannem Mordaunt*, Secretary.

POST-SCRIPT.

SInce the writing of theſe, here arrived two Ships from Sagatea, *which brought with them ſome ſeventy people, Men, Women and Children, who deſired to be received to their former Beings*

Beings and Relations, promising obedience to the present Government; whereupon I called the Councel together, and having debated the matter, we concluded, That they should, as many as would, stay here, which We conceived could not be denied them in justice. Yet suddenly after some of the Commanders and other of the ruder sort of the people, gave out threatning speeches that they would send them all away, and to that purpose gave Powder and Shot to some of their Soldiers; but having timely Advertisement thereof, I took speedy course to prevent their mischievous intent, and by the blessing of the Lord I so pacified them as that they did not proceed to Action, and for the present they are all at quiet, and I hope will so continue. Howsoever my Resolution is firm and unchangeable, rather to die in the just defence of your right of Government, then to comply with them in the least of their unlawful desires, so saith

Your faithful Servant,

Jo: Forster.

Exam. *per Johannem Mordaunt*, Secretary.

The Superscription.

To the Honorable Company of *Adventurers* for the *Sommer Islands*, These present.

To the Right Honorable The Company of *Adventurers* for Plantation in *Sommer Islands*.

Right Honorable Sirs,

YOurs of the first of *January*, 1649. directed to our present Governor, came to his hands the 22. of *May*, 1650. and the next day his Commission was publiquely read in the Church, where he took his Oath in the presence of the Countrey, to govern according to your Laws and Orders.

We do most heartily thank you for the choice of so grave and

and ſo experienced a Gentleman to rule and govern us, and although the Government was quite out of frame and in a dangerous poſture, yet now (bleſſed be God) there is ſuch a willing and ready obedience from all the people in general, that the Government is reduced to its ancient bounds in a peaceable, quiet and orderly poſture, and I hope the Lord will ſo continue it, to our comfort and your good.

We do thank you alſo for your Favor and Encouragement by your Preſent of 20 l. to our Governor which was received in commodities; he had a very quick vend for all, eſpecially the Sack ſtaid not long upon his hands; we all helped to drink it off, for we knew it was paid for before.

As for your Order in placing of Officers, we have gone as near as we could, Mr *Painter* being out of the Land, we have continued Mr *Morgan* in *Southampton* Tribe, Mr *Wainwright* refuſed the place, by reaſon of ſome former Engagement to the Countrey when they were in Arms. Mr *Norwood* would accept of the Place, but he would not take the Oath with the reſt of the Councel, ſo they excepted againſt him, and I took in Mr *John Turner* in his ſtead for *Devonſhire* Tribe.

We are given to underſtand that you are informed, that the people which are gone from us were forced away. Thus much we can aſſure and affirm, that there was never a Councellor in the whole Iſland that had any hand in it; neither did it appear unto us, that they had any deſire to ſtay here; they might have all ſtayed, if but ſubmitted to the Government. We do expect them daily here, for Mr *Philip Chaddock*, is gone out of *New England* to fetch them off, but with what ſafety we can receive them, except they do ſubmit to the Government, we know not, yet we do intend to receive ſuch as have any intereſt, and attend your further pleaſure concerning them.

Your clemency in remitting former Miſcarriages being timely publiſhed, hath not onely bound up that ſore, but hath alſo ſtopt the current of other more deſperate proceedings.

We have your Orders in tranſmitting the material Evidences in all Appeals. We have made ſeizure of all the Goods of Captain *Turner*, but can finde no Spaniſh goods, and therefore have onely ſecured them here till further order. And as concerning

cerning the wreck, all plead that they have accounted to your Commiſſioners.

The cauſe of your Ships long ſtay was no fault of ours; ſhe came in very unſeaſonable, yet nevertheleſs ſhe might have had a good Voyage to the *Barbado's* with Live-cattel, Beef, Pork and Fiſh, but it ſeems their Commiſſion was not ſtrong enough to proceed in that Deſign: We have always deſired to have your Ship here before *Chriſtmas*, and do ſtill deſire it, and ſo you may be ſure of a quick Return.

There is little or no goods in the Countrey, it were well that a Store of goods were placed in the Town for the uſe of the Countrey, ſo ſhould you be ſure to ſecure all the Tobacco's, that none ſhould be traded away from you, and for ſuch goods as come over to particular men here, they come to the Planter at ſuch an exceſſive Rate, that they are not able to pay for them.

The Inhabitants requeſted us to acquaint you, how that they have been long Petitioners to you for to afford them ſome Relief, and eaſe the heavy burthen that is taxed upon poor mens labor, by that inſupportable Excize and other Taxes upon Tobacco, ſo that in concluſion the poor Planter's twelve moneths labor is ſwallowed up by Excize and Cuſtom; But in ſtead of relief they finde a heavier load continually upon them. Conſider their condition, and relieve them if you can, we leave them to your due and ſerious conſideration.

We have according to Order ſummoned Colonel *Sandys* his Agent and Tenants, and he ſhall receive an Account in his particulars Letters.

We ſhould be very ready and willing to do Sir *Benjamin Ruddiard* and Mr *Grant* any ſervice, in recovering of their Rents from their Tenants, but their Agents never appear unto us, neither do we know who they are.

Likewiſe Mr *Lewis* his Agent hath not required our Aſſiſtance, neither do we know the ſtate of that buſineſs.

As for Mr *Cawleys* buſineſs, he had between twenty and thirty Actions tryed this Aſſize; Captain *Thomas Burrows* being his Agent, he recovered them all, except two Actions with Mr *Sommerſal*, in which there is an Appeal granted, which the Secretary will give an exact Account of.

We have received three Barrels of Powder, 500 pound of Match, but no Colours, though expreſſed in your Letters. We ſhall be careful to put your Laws in execution for Powder from Ships arriving here.

As for Mr *Drakes* buſineſs, there was an Account given to Captain *Jennins*, and Mr *Francis White*, according to order.

We have received ſix pair of Drum heads, with braces, ſnares and lines, which are diſpoſed of according to Order, we deſire you to ſend the Colours for the Forts by the next.

We have given order to Mr *Norwood* to take charge of the Books given to Mr *Barber*, which were left with Mr *Goulding*; Mr *Norwood* hath received them, being in number twenty four, and two Books which Mr *Goulding* gave at his death.

Captain *Jennins* upon ſome words ſpoken by him, was charged by ſome in the Iſlands of Treaſon, whereupon he fled, we doubt not but he is in *London*; we have ſent the Proceedings againſt him under the Secretaries hand, the which we leave to your judgement and diſcretion. There was a Report made in the Iſlands, that ſome of the Company was hiring of a Ship to take the Iſlands, and that Captain *Iennins* was privy to it, but for our parts we give no faith to that Report, it bred a great deal of diſturbance here.

And whereas the Councel of State, together with your ſelves, hath harboured ſo good an opinion of me, as to intruſt me in this imployment, I ſhall through Gods Aſſiſtance, render a faithful Account of my actions, and to the utmoſt of my power preſerve your Rights and Priviledges according to the Oath which I have taken, and I doubt not, the fidelity of my Councel, and the obedience of the people.

You give us notice of an Order of the Councel of State for the ſending home of Captain *Turner* and Mr *Vyner*, upon Examination of their Crimes and Miſdemeanors; we have no written Accuſation againſt them, ſo that it remains onely to ſecure the perſon of Captain *Turner* till further order, Mr *Vyner* being long ſince dead.

Mr *Hooper* is a very ſickly man, therefore we beſeech you conſider our neceſſity, and ſend us a ſupply of honeſt able men. Mr *Pointal* came not to us, yet we underſtand that your intentions

tions were real towards us, for which we give you thanks, and we hope you will not be unmindful to send us a couple at least by the next Ship; they may live very comfortably here, we have built a house in Town from the ground for one against he comes.

You made mention of an Order from the Councel of State for removing Mr *Vaughan* the Secretary, if we did see cause; Truly we see no other, but that he hath been very diligent and careful in his Betrustment, and very little Encouragement he hath, having had never a servant since his coming to the Place; And now he is married to a yong woman, the daughter of Mr *John Tremmingham*, and more charges like to come upon him: A little Encouragement would do well, but we leave him to your grave consideration, not doubting but that you will be pleased to answer his expectation, for we do assure you, he doth take a great deal of pains.

We do likewise commend unto your charitable thoughts the Petition of Mrs *Vyner*, and that you will be pleased to signifie your pleasure concerning her unto us.

As concerning the several Orders sent unto us; For the first concerning the setling of Officers, we made Captain *Richard Jennins* Councellor of *Sandys* Tribe, Mr *Charls Morgan* for *Southampton*, Mr *John Devit* for *Warwick* Tribe, Mr *John Tremingham* for *Pagets*, Mr *John Turner* for *Devonshire*, Mr *William Berckley* for *Pembroke*, Mr *Thomas Penninston* for *Smiths* Tribe, Mr *John Milner* for *Hamilton*, Mr *Nath: Stowe* for S. *Georges*.

II. Concerning your Act of Indempnity, it was executed according to order, and wrought a good effect.

III. The several Appeals of Mr *Hunt* against *Iennins*, as they proceeded hence without order, so they remain in the Office, and no body looks after them.

IV. Mr Sheriffs order for ten pounds gratuity was delivered to him.

V. The Appeal of *Robert Nolton* and your Order thereupon, was executed accordingly.

VI. Your Order concerning Mr *Whites* suing of Captain *Turner*, Captain *Turner* readily submits unto your Order, and

he doth acknowledge your favor and justice in reserving him the benefit of Appeal.

VII. Your Order concerning *Langstons* Will, which was sent to you last year; We had a Debate here in Court concerning it, according to your Order: We finde upon the Oath of Captain *Iennins*, that the Will was made *bona fide*, and the Oath of one of the Sea-men, who brought the said Will into the Office with Captain *Iennins*, and proved it to be the last Will and Testament of the said *Langston*; but having no Seal fixed at it, we leave it to your judgement, whether it be of validity to carry Lands from the heir in common Law.

VIII. The Appeal of Mr *William Berckley* against *Marsh*, we have according to order, made void the said Verdict illegally obtained, being not warned to answer such an Action, nor no Defence made in that Plea, as appears unto us by the Oath of Mr *John Stowe*, Mr *Richard Hunt*, and divers others; And therefore we have granted Mr *Berckley* a new Tryal accordingly: but Captain *Marsh* hath not been here these four years.

IX. Your Order *inter Lowe* and *Iennins*, was put in execution accordingly.

X. Mr *Pointel's* Order concerning a share of Land, we hear nothing of him.

XI. We humbly desire that no Appeals be taken notice of, except they be certified under the Secretaries hand, and that you will be pleased to expound the meaning of double costs and charges upon Appeals, according to the Book of Orders, for that Article 138. in the Book of Orders is not clear to our apprehensions.

XII. You shall receive with our letters the Appeal of Mr *Axon* on the behalf of Mr *Waye* against Mr *George Tucker*, with the proceedings thereupon under the Secretaries hand.

XIII. The Appeals of Mr *Cawley* against *Sommersal.*

XIV. And another of Mr *Cawley* about a servant.

XV. The Free-school presented by the grand Inquest which we leave to your consideration. There are great complaints of those that have many children, we leave it to your judgements to regulate the matter, or signifie your pleasure therein unto us.

We have sent you *Allens* Petition.

You

You may pleaſe to take notice that Mr *George Tucker* did in the Court after the Jury had brought in their Verdict of 50 l. Damage for him in an Action of Defamation againſt *Roger Axon*, offer to acquit the ſaid *Axon*, if he would acknowledge that he had done him wrong, but the ſaid *Axon* did obſtinately refuſe to make an acknowledgement: Wherefore Mr *Tucker* humbly deſires that the ſaid Verdict be confirmed, and he will diſpoſe of the money for the publique good of the Iſlands.

We have bought a Barrel of Powder of the *Marſhal* for an addition to our Store, which Mr Sheriff hath conſigned payment of by Bills of Exchange charged upon your Treaſurer, which we hope you will order payment of accordingly.

We humbly deſire that you will be pleaſed to furniſh us with ſome Arms and Ammunition as you ſhall think fit. We repaired our Forts, and under God made them tenable againſt any Aſſault. We are much threatned, but be you confident whileſt we have to do with your Government, there ſhall not dare to be the leaſt oppoſition to your Orders and Commands. And we are glad that the Honorable Councel of State doth confirm your Rights in this Plantation, which no Enemy ſhall defeat you of, whileſt we have a drop of blood to maintain it.

The Agrievances of the ſeveral Councellors; That whereas it is a charge and trouble unto them to be at all Meetings of the publique Service, and no notice taken of them by your Honors, nor Profit nor Priviledges belonging to their Places, for they contribute with others in all Levies and Taxes; They humbly deſire, that your Honors do allow each of them a ſervant as formerly done, or otherwiſe what you pleaſe; they are ſo modeſt, that your wills ſhall be their content.

We have been requeſted by certain of the Inhabitants to give way for them to preſent ſomething to your Honors by way of Declaration: it is a thing that hath been formerly practiſed here, and allowed by your ſelves, that if the Countrey were agrieved, they might preſent their Grievances by way of Petition to your Honors, and ſo far we have now conſented to them, what your Honors ſhall order therein, ſhall be obſerved by us.

We humbly deſire your Honors to regard the Petition of *George Waſhingham*, who was condemned to die for words tending

tending to High Treaſon, he remains in Priſon expecting your mercy and pardon.

We humbly deſire your Honors not to credit all Reports and ſcandalous Letters, the which have bred a great diſtance and diſ-affection betwixt ſome of your Members, and ſome people here; for our parts, we do own you all in general as Members of one Body, and our Relation is alike to all, and ſhall not profeſs it onely in words, but in practice, and ſo by Gods aſſiſtance create and preſerve a right underſtanding between you and us.

We do likewiſe give you to underſtand, That we have made open Proclamation through the Iſlands, that if any perſon or perſons could object any thing againſt Captain *Turner*, or give any evidence on the behalf of the Honorable Company, that they ſhould repair to me and my Councel at a time and place limited, and they ſhould be heard, but none appears.

We humbly deſire you to declare your Judgement in the Caſe of Mr. *Ewer* and Mr. *Coupland.* And we deſire you that Secretary *Mordaunt* do ſend the laſt Order; there was an Order mentioned in the general Letter, but we could not finde it.

We do recommend you and your Affairs to the protection of Almighty God, and remain,

Your Honors Servants,

Exam. *per Johannem Mordaunt,*
Secretary.

William Seymer.
John Milner.
John Devit.
Tho: Peniſtone.
Nath: Stowe.
Joſias Forſter.
Roger Wood.
Henry Tucker, Sheriff.
J: Tremingham.

J. Vaughan, Secret.

POST-

POST-SCRIPT.

Mr. John Tremingham *having the charge of the Government when your Commiſsion came, did very faithfully in obedience to your Commiſsion, deliver up all things into the hands of our preſent Governor, with the Caſtle and Servants.*

Joſias Forſter.
Roger Wood.
J. Vaughan *Secret.* Henry Tucker, *Sheriff.*

The Superſcription.

To the Right Honorable the Company of *Adventurers* for Plantation in *Sommer Iſlands*, Theſe preſent.

Exam. *per Iohannem Mordaunt*, Secret.

To the Honorable

The Governor and Company of *Sommer Iſlands* Plantation,

The humble Petition of the Inhabitants of the ſaid Iſlands;

HUMBLY SHEWETH,

THat whereas through the goodneſs of God theſe Iſlands for many years paſt have enjoyed a happy tranquility, enjoying Peace and Plenty under the Government of your Honors, the Honorable Company for this Plantation, whoſe conſtant care and endeavors, together with no little charge and expences, have been from time to time to protect and preſerve us, according to his Majeſties Letters Patents, King *Iames* of famous Memory, which we ſtill deſire may be the true

true Rule and Square of your Government, as that to this time hath been, and we humbly conceive will be the onely way to continue our happineſs and your intereſts. And having had former experience that you have not ceaſed upon all occaſions to be the onely Aſylum, Sanctuary and place of Refuge for theſe Iſlands in general, or any Member of it to flie unto in particular in the time of trouble; We therefore being wheeled about into theſe times of Diſtraction, building upon your wonted Favor, to deſire to preſent this our Declaration and Humble Requeſt unto your Honors, and therefore not doubting of your Honors favorable hearing, and gracious anſwering our juſt Deſires, we declare as followeth:

I.

That the Honorable Company for the *Sommer Iſlands* Plantation legally admitted according to the Letters Patents, is a lawful Power ſet over us, and that we do own them, and do and will ſubmit to them.

II.

We declare, that we do not acknowledge, neither will we obey or ſubmit to any other Commands to be prevalent here, then that which comes to us by or from the Honorable Company, and limited by the Letters Patents.

III.

We declare, that ſo long as the Company be ſuffered to act freely, and that no other Power interpoſeth them, we will willingly obſerve and ſubmit to their Orders and Commands to us thus directed. But for ſo much as ſhall be impoſed upon the Company by any Power whatſoever otherwiſe then from the Honorable Company, we may not, we dare not, we will not obey or be ſubject unto them, but to the utmoſt of our powers withſtand and oppoſe them.

Fur-

Further our humble Petition and Requeſt unto your Honors is, That you would be pleaſed to confirm it there for the future, and to the Worſhipful the Governor and Councel here; that they would be pleaſed to put theſe things following in practiſe for the preſent.

I.

That none be ſuffered for the future to bear any Office or Truſt amongſt us or command over us, that will not agree and ſubſcribe to this; but that a watchful eye may be kept over them, and a careful obſervation of their Demeanor and Actions.

II.

That if any Command or Order do come to the Governor or Countrey from any but the Company, that the parties that ſend them, bring them, or divulge them, be cenſured as Diſturbers of the Iſlands Peace, and that ſuch Commands and Orders may be forthwith ſpeedily ſuppreſſed and proteſted againſt.

III.

We deſire further your Honors to conſider our great neceſſity in the want of Miniſters, and we beſeech you to ſend us a ſupply of Orthodox men by the next Return.

Thus have we made bold to preſent unto your Honors our Deſires and Reſolutions, which we are reſolved to live and die in, and to maintain with our lives and fortunes to the laſt drop of our bloods, and we queſtion not of your encouragement therein, and of your utmoſt aid and aſſiſtance to ſo juſt and conſcionable Reſolutions and Endeavors.

And whereas ſome Malignant ſpirits of our own, together with thoſe Fugitives that fled from the Iſland of *Barbado's* have threatned to take this Iſland from you and us, and to make this their place of Rendezvous, that ſo they may the better effect

 their

their Designs upon the *Barbado's* : We do therefore earnestly desire you, that since it concerns you as much as our selves to use diligence, to prevent their Plots at home, and likewise to send us some store of Arms and Ammunition, that so we may be the better enabled to give them entertainment if they shall come, and to preserve this Island, your just Rights and Interest, and the Lives and Estates of us the Inhabitants, from the fury and rapine of any that should oppose us.

Lastly, We desire the Governor and Councel that they would transfer these Desires and Resolutions of the Countrey by this Ship to the Company, and that they may be likewise recorded in the Office here.

Rich: Herbert Captain, *&c.*

Exam. *per Iohannem Mordaunt*,
Secret.

To the Honorable

Sir *John Danvers* Knight,

Governor of the SOMMER ISLANDS Company, *&c.*

SIR,

WHen I last enjoyed the sweet Air, and those other pleasurable Refreshments, which you have often vouchsafed unto me at your house in *Chelsey*, I found with you many Gentlemen of the *Sommer Islands* Company, whose presence occasioned my perusal of a Petition, with the annexed Papers and Letters, intended to be presented to the Councel of State, touching the present condition of those Islands; and I have now sent you this Account of my thoughts and desires

ſires thereupon, in hope to give you thereby an opportunity to improve your own good purpoſes towards the diſtreſſed and diſtracted Inhabitants of thoſe Iſles : For I being heretofore by that Company freely choſen to be Governor of that Colony, as likewiſe approved by the Committee for Plantations; and having alſo at every Return ſince that time received very many Letters, teſtifying a general and extraordinary deſire in thoſe Inhabitants, that my Affairs would permit my Acceptance of their Government; it makes me not onely to conceive my ſelf thereby greatly obliged in thankfulneſs for that reſpect, but it hath alſo rooted in me an unfeigned deſire both of eſtabliſhing their peace, and of preventing (according to my power) whatſoever may be deſtructive to their welfare. And this deſire is the ſtronger in me, becauſe I evidently diſcover that the neglect of timely ſetling thoſe Iſlands in a ſafe and flouriſhing Conſtitution, may not onely occaſion the ſudden ſubverſion of that Colony, but of many miſchievous effects alſo to all our Plantations in *America*, and conſequently to the inexpreſſible future damage of this Republique.

I need not illuſtrate this unto you, nor have I now written to provoke you to thoſe proſecutions, which may conduce to the well being of the *Sommer Iſlands* or *Virginia*; for you have ſufficiently teſtified many ways your zeal therein, and there are elſewhere, as well as in the annexed Papers, publique acknowledgements thereof from others; but my intention is rather hereby to repreſent unto you a brief Teſtimonial of my own gratitude and good affection to the Inhabitants of the *Sommer Iſlands*, by offering ſomewhat toward the extenuating of that ſeeming Revolt from this Commonwealth, which they are charged withal; and by giving in my ſenſe and favorable interpretation of that conditional Submiſſion which they have lately ſent from the Body of their Plantation, to your ſelf and the Honorable Company.

I muſt confeſs that ſome Relations which are made of Miſcarriages happened among them, being ſtrictly conſidered, have rendred them very blame-worthy, and many of them (I fear)

are inexcusable; yet when I consider that such failings are at this time Epidemical among the *English* in all parts of the world whersoever they reside, as was heretofore the disease called the *Sweating Sickness*, I dare not (as many do) peremptorily conclude them justly to be proceeded against as enemies to this Republique, much less can I be so uncharitable, when I consider at how great a distance they are from our Climate, of what sort of people their greater number consists; under what Government they had their first being; how swiftly and confidently Mis-informations are scattered; how difficultly true Relations are divulged, begetting a right understanding of our proceedings, and how miserably that People hath been distracted by the Troubles and Divisions lately happening among them; For if they who have resided from the beginning of the late Troubles, where they saw and heard dayly all Transactions between the late King and Parliament, have nevertheless been sometime deluded, and obtained favor upon return to a right understanding and prosecution of their Duties, doubtless a larger indulgence may seem due to the *Bermudians* upon their Submission, who have erred chiefly by Mis-information: And in my understanding that Obedience which they have expressed in their late Petition to their Honorable Governor and Company, is not wholly to be rejected, though it be not drawn up in such terms as may be justly expected from them hereafter.

Nay, that which makes their Submission imperfect in the judgement of many, renders it more praise-worthy then culpable in my opinion, if the Priviledges claim'd by the Adventurers do really belong unto them; For though it was intended by their Patent, that the Supream Magistracy of this Nation should from time to time have the Sovereignty over the Inhabitants both of those Islands, and of all other Colonies under their protection; the Inhabitants of every Colony ought nevertheless to be obedient to the Commands of that Government and those Governors, to which they are next and immediately subordinate, and should not obey the Commands of any other Power, but such as comes unto them by the mediation of their proper Superiors, until such their Power be lawfully suspended, and that Suspen-

sion

ſion orderly ſignified unto them by that Supream Authority that makes it void or invalid for the preſent : For if ſuch as are ſubordinate eſpecially to remote Governments ſhould be obliged to regulate their Obedience according to every wandring information, though ſeemingly probable, and give credit to that which comes unto them by ſtrange hands, there would never be an end neither of popular Confuſions and Diſtractions, nor of Rebellions againſt Supream and Subordinate Powers.

A juſt duty may occaſion great inconveniences by being irregularly performed, and if this Republique ſhould accept the immediate acknowledgement of her Supremacy from the *Sommer Iſlands*, before her Authority were duly recommended to their Inhabitants by the Governor and Company, to whom they were more immediately ſubordinate, it might occaſion more detriment then real advantage to both Authorities : For they who upon rumors or motives from a forreign Account are irregularly drawn to the performance of a juſt act, may quickly upon the like motives be irregularly withdrawn again from a righteous undertaking, and the Commonwealth can have no other aſſurance of the fidelity of ſuch a people, ſave a fickle and ungrounded profeſſion of their preſent inclination; whereas when their Submiſſion comes warranted by the Authority of thoſe on whom they have a lawful and reaſonable dependence; the legality and reaſonableneſs of it makes the one Party the more bold and conſtant in their obedience, and gives the other Party the more aſſurance of that obedience which is profeſſed thereunto. And this Commonwealth hath no Diſadvantage (as I conceive) by conniving for the preſent at that profeſſion of abſolute Obedience, which the *Bermudians* have made to their Governor and Company here reſiding in *England*; for if the ſaid Inhabitants of the *Sommer Iſlands* (as they aſſert in their Petition) will be abſolutely obedient to all the Commands of their Governor and Company here reſiding, it may be expected that they will be obedient alſo to the Supream Authority of this Nation, unleſs their ſaid Governor and Company enjoyn the contrary, which may be confidently preſumed will not be done by them againſt the intereſt which they have by their ſhares

ſhares of Land, ſo valuable by the Power and Priviledges thereunto belonging.

Upon conſideration of the premiſes, it is humbly propoſed on the behalf of the diſtreſſed Inhabitants of the ſaid Iſlands, as followeth: Firſt, That whereas the ſaid Iſlanders profeſs abſolute obedience to thoſe Commands which come to them from their Governor and Company, that it may by your Endeavor be made appear and declared, whether an abſolute obedience be immediately due from the ſaid Iſlanders to the Company, or no? and if it be ſo, whether the Commands of our Supream Magiſtracy here, ought not to be recommended to the ſaid Iſlanders by means of their ſaid Governor and Company, before the ſaid Iſlanders are bound to take notice of ſuch Commands as obliging, and that proviſion may be made accordingly to preſerve the juſt intereſt of the ſaid Iſlanders, together with the diſtinct Rights of this Republique, and of the ſaid Company. Secondly, That you would be pleaſed to improve your uttermoſt Endeavor to mediate the Reconcilement of the ſaid Iſlanders to the State upon their abſolute ſubmiſſion thereunto, when the Commands of Supream Authority ſhall be recommended to them by the Company; and vouchſafe ſo to haſten it alſo, that the Enemies of this Commonwealth may not get opportunities by the delay thereof, to endanger the total loſs of thoſe Iſlands at this time, wherein many are watching Advantages for divers ends to ſurprize them.

What Advantages in particular may be loſt or gotten, and what Damages may be incur'd or avoided by neglect of thoſe Iſles, may appear by conſidering the annexed Papers which are now offered to peruſal, without ſuch further Obſervations as I could have made upon them, if my urgent Affairs would have permitted the proſecution of my firſt intention, which are the cauſe that you receive theſe lines ſo imperfect, and ſo abruptly from

Your humble Servant,

July the 18th 1651. GEO: WITHER.

FINIS.

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